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Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's and Hans Christian Andersen's Visions of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Spain: "¿el ojo desnudo de todo prisma de partido?"

1. Introduction

Writing from Montevideo, on January 25th, 1846, en route for Europe and North America, the future Argentine president, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888), analyses the causes of the conflicts then occurring in the River Plate.[1] He identifies in River Plate culture a tendency to "errar sola por sus soledades, huyendo del trato de los otros pueblos del mundo" (Sarmiento 1993: 35). This cultural trait, which he calls *americanismo*, is defined as "la reproducción de la vieja tradición castellana, la inmovilidad i el orgullo del árabe" (Sarmiento 1993: 35). He concludes: "Tal es la cuestión del Plata mirada con el ojo desnudo de todo prisma de partido" (Sarmiento 1993: 35).

Clearly, the exiled Sarmiento, a great admirer of France and the USA, an enthusiastic exponent of European-inspired modernisation, and an implacable opponent of the dictator Rosas, did not look at the turmoil in his beloved land with an eye, "desnudo de todo prisma de partido". And, as we shall see, the same of course is true of his observations about Spain, a country which aroused in him deep – and conflicting – thoughts and emotions.

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1 This was during the "guerra grande", when Montevideo, with the help of many Europeans, including French and British naval forces, was resisting the siege by Rosas's and Oribe's troops. A committed moderniser and enemy of the Argentine dictator Rosas, Sarmiento was travelling from Chilean exile to Europe and the USA, to study education systems. En route, Sarmiento visited islands in the Pacific, Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro. In Europe he was in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and England (also North Africa). In America he visited Canada, the USA and Cuba. His accounts of his travels, *Viajes por Europa, Africa y América*, was published in Chile between 1849 and 1851.

Arriving in France in May 1846, Sarmiento stayed in the Paris region until mid-September, when he headed south to Spain. It was a complicated journey: the first stage, by train, was to Tours via Orleans. From there he took the river steamer to Nantes, where he caught the Bordeaux stagecoach. He continued by stagecoach to Bayonne, from where the stagecoaches for Madrid left. Passing through Irun on 3rd October, Sarmiento stopped at Burgos before proceeding to Madrid, where he stayed for two months, also visiting Aranjuez, Toledo and El Escorial. In mid-November Sarmiento continued his journey south by stagecoach to Andalusia, visiting Cordoba and Seville. Then he took the steamer, first to Cadiz, and then on to Valencia via Gibraltar. The next stage, to Barcelona (which Sarmiento considered to be leaving Spain), was again by coach. He crossed to Palma de Mallorca by steamer, finally leaving Spanish territory by sailing boat for Algiers, on 20th December.[2]

Sarmiento is not a typical travel writer, in the sense of one who – whatever the degree of accuracy or inaccuracy – records in some detail impressions of a journey. Rather, in a series of lengthy, separate narratives, Sarmiento describes a limited range of the people he meets (these are mainly intellectuals, diplomats, military officers and politicians), and a few major cultural phenomena that he seems to offer as paradigmatic. His descriptions are based as much on his reading as on his direct observation.[3] Although formally presented as letters, Sarmiento's narratives are really essays. As Emilio Carilla observes of them, they are "cartas enhebradas en una intención novelesca o marcadamente literaria"; and they are "cartas sólo en apariencia; del encabezamiento de los largos capítulos" (Carilla 1964: 58).

Sixteen years later, in 1862, the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen travelled extensively through Spain, visiting many of the same places as Sarmiento had. Andersen's account of his journey, *A Visit to Spain and North Africa, 1862*, is an enthusiastic, touristic account

2 Details are taken from his *Diario de gastos* (Sarmiento 1993: 471-568).

3 For example, much of his letter from Madrid (where he was for the wedding of Isabel II) consists of a lengthy essay on bullfighting, and its supposed historical and present significance in Spanish culture.

which, unlike Sarmiento's writing, follows a clear travelogue structure.[4]

Andersen entered Spain through Catalonia, on 6th September, travelling by stagecoach and train to Barcelona. From there he went by steamer to Valencia. Valencia to Alicante was by train, after which Andersen went to Cartagena via Murcia by stagecoach. From Cartagena to Malaga was again by steamer, while from Malaga to Gibraltar via Granada he travelled by stagecoach. Andersen's North African episode was in Tangier, where he spent a week as the guest of the British Minister, Sir John Drummond Hay, and whence he returned across the strait to Cadiz, aboard a French warship. His journey from Cadiz to Cordoba via Seville was by train, and its continuation on to Madrid was by stagecoach and train. While he was in Madrid (where he stayed for three weeks), Andersen visited Toledo, by train. The last part of his journey north to France via Castile and the Basque country was nightmarish. As he comments, with great understatement, "The railway line up to France, to Bayonne, is still incomplete in many places" (Andersen 1975: 175). In fact the first section was only complete as far as El Escorial. From here Andersen took a stagecoach to Sanchidrián, where the railway resumed as far as Burgos. From Burgos the line was complete as far as Olazagutía, beyond Vitoria. The final stage of the journey, back to Bayonne via San Sebastián, was by stagecoach. He arrived back in France on 23rd December.

As we have seen, the two writers' journeys were of comparable duration, and undertaken at the same time of year. In terms of the order of the places visited – with the exception of the very different placing of the North African component – the two journeys are not far from being mirror images of each other. Both writers were of course distinguished – and privileged – visitors. Until the last phase of his journey, when he was probably unwell (not to mention having a lucky escape from death, in Burgos), Andersen provides a highly positive and detailed account of people, landscapes, cities – and food: Andersen is an outsider who promotes Spain as a colourful, welcoming touristic destination. He spoke virtually no Spanish, but always made the

4 Interestingly, Andersen's journey, too, had a royal dimension: in 1862 the Queen visited Andalusia. He witnessed the preparations in Malaga for her visit, and was present in Granada at the same time as the royal party.

effort to communicate with people. Sarmiento, by contrast, comes across as a lonely, introverted figure, who talks to nobody – and hates the food.[5] He is emotionally attached to Spain, but is greatly resentful of the fact: the journey through Spain is in essence really a progressive exploration of Sarmiento's own cultural identity – real or imagined. While these two accounts of journeys represent very different motives, and very different ways of seeing and interpreting nineteenth-century Spain, nevertheless the two writers were, in reality, in the same places and seeing the same things. In this essay I focus on four important elements which are common to both accounts: travel by stagecoach; the rural landscape; the bullfight; cities and culture.

2. Travel by stagecoach

At the beginning of his letter from Madrid, Sarmiento makes this declaration: "Poned, pues, entera fe en la severidad e imparcialidad de mis juicios, que nada tienen de prevenidos" (Sarmiento 1993: 128). With these words Sarmiento claims a detached viewpoint and asks his readers to accept the objectivity of the account that follows.

The first part of Sarmiento's journey clearly represents a transition from what he sees as civilised modernity into another space, which is characterised by exoticism, eccentricity and danger. Initially, rather like a modern-day tourist in a poor country, he is to some extent insulated from his surroundings. The Bayonne to Madrid stagecoaches are, he informs us, the only comfortable ones in Spain: French-built, they are an oasis of normality, of civilisation. He then goes on to contrast typical Spanish transport practice with that of "developed" countries like England, France, Germany and the US, where he states that the stagecoaches are hauled by two to five horses, using a standardised harness, and are driven by soberly-dressed coachmen who from a raised seat guide the horses with a whip (Sarmiento 1993: 129).[6] In Spain, by contrast, eight, or even ten pairs of mules, adorned with

5 In reality, Sarmiento did not lack for stimulating company: French intellectuals figured prominently (see Benítez 1993).

6 At this stage, of course, the only one of these countries with which he could make direct comparison was France: south of Tours, where the railway terminated, Sarmiento had travelled by stagecoach and steamer. However, in the other countries mentioned, which he would later visit, stagecoaches must have been a rarity, since extensive railway networks already existed by the mid-1840s.

brightly-coloured head plumes and numerous jingling accessories, are urged on by shouting coachmen dressed in Andalusian costume and Arab sheepskin capes (1993: 129-130). Sarmiento reflects that this spectacle overwhelms the foreign traveller, who believes himself to be in an enchanted land – and expects at any moment to meet Don Quijote, or to be attacked by highwaymen. At this point, Sarmiento is an outsider, looking at Spain from a standpoint of amused superiority.[7]

By 1862, the date of Andersen's journey, rail travel was the norm throughout much of Europe, although the network was somewhat slower to develop in Spain and southern France. As Andersen lightheartedly observes, (at Perpignan): "I had to revert to the travel of olden days, again to take my seat in the poetical conveyance of our poetic old times" (Andersen 1975: 15). Once again, the outsider crosses a frontier into an exotic space. Much later in the narrative, however, at El Escorial, when Andersen is in a very different mood, the same change of conveyance is seen as entirely negative: "Instead of the comfortable railway carriage we were packed into a narrow diligence, which we would have to endure until daybreak" (Andersen 1975: 176).

Although, like Sarmiento, Andersen deploys the usual clichés about Don Quijote and highwaymen, he provides far more detail of the reality of stagecoach travel than Sarmiento does. Indeed, so frequently do descriptions of different vehicles appear in Andersen's narrative, that one might suspect a special interest in transport, on his part, and in consequence perhaps give considerable credence to his observations.[8] Andersen's first journey by stagecoach was from Perpignan to Gerona, at that time the northern terminus of the railway line from Barcelona. The nationality of the conveyance in which he travelled through Catalonia is not given, but perhaps it is French, since later, in Alicante, Andersen expresses the desire "to try a real Spanish diligence" (1975: 51). The vehicle appears to be a hybrid: it was ap-

7 Benítez (1993: 724) believes that the coach and mules were indeed decorated, and the coachman dressed, as Sarmiento says, since this corresponds to a drawing published in 1846 by the artist Karl Girardet, one of Sarmiento's travelling companions (although he notes ten mules, not sixteen or twenty). However, and as Sarmiento must have known, the colourful costume and the decoration were in honour of the forthcoming royal nuptials.

8 Various diligences (stagecoaches) are described, including a coupé and "a kind of omnibus with seats along the sides" (105). *Tartanas*, too, are mentioned.

parently hauled by twelve horses (Andersen 1975: 16), more than double the maximum specified by Sarmiento[9] – but below the minimum, if the draft animals were in fact mules.[10] The animals, like Sarmiento's Spanish mules, wear jingling bells – although they are driven with a whip, by a coachman whose dress excites no comment. At Figueras, a new driver continues to use a whip; but now, additionally, there is a *zagal*, or mule-boy (who behaves exactly as Sarmiento says, running back and forth, shouting at the animals) and there are "twelve fresh mules" (Andersen 1975: 19).

The next scene involving a stagecoach is when Andersen witnesses the arrival in Valencia of the (horse-drawn) Barcelona service. Andersen, of course, had arrived in Valencia by steamer – and was exceedingly thankful for this.

> It was smelly, dusty and only a ghost of the coach we had seen two days ago. [in Barcelona] The horses were dripping with sweat, the vehicle itself was macadamized with dust and the passengers limped out like hospital patients. Some were in slippers because during the long journey their feet had swollen in their boots, others were carrying their coats: their hair was matted with dust, which also lined each wrinkled face. This is how the company looked and the wretched centaur, the outrider who had almost grown fast to his horse, was in a worse plight (Andersen 1975: 42).

Later, travelling by stagecoach from Alicante to Cartagena via Murcia, and from Malaga to Granada, the motive power is always provided by ten or twelve mules (never the sixteen to twenty specified by Sarmiento). Interestingly, although Andersen frequently comments on the appalling state of the roads, and gives graphic accounts of travellers' discomfort, he admires aspects of the Spanish stagecoach system: he praises the Malaga-Granada-Madrid service, where relays of mules are changed every fifteen miles, and the machines "go at a tremendous pace, not like our slow stage coaches" (Andersen 1975: 78).

The picture changes during the north-bound half of Andersen's journey. First, he must 'endure about twenty-three hours' in a stage coach, as the Cordoba-Madrid railway is not yet completed. And the last stages of the journey, are positively nightmarish: as they drive

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9 "[L]a dilijencia ha de ser tirada por dos, cuatro, cinco caballos manejados del pescante" (Sarmiento 1993: 129).

10 "La dilijencia es tirada por ocho pares de mulas [...] a veces por diez pares" (Sarmiento 1993: 129).

through the night in a snowstorm from El Escorial towards Burgos, a window pane of the coach falls out, and the swirling snow blows in. Andersen is thoroughly bewildered: "Is this being in Spain, I asked myself, is this what it is like in a warm country? It was like being at home in the far north" (Andersen 1975: 182). Later, crossing the Basque country, once more hauled by horses, not mules, Andersen misses warmth so much, that at one point he longs for the "tepid rain-water with a drop of anisette" (1975: 183) that he had found so unpalatable in the arid Levante.

Finally, with the descent to San Sebastián, the ordeal is over, as the coach stops at a comfortable *fonda*. Andersen enthuses about the town and the surrounding landscape: he almost imagines it is summer, when "the mountains are covered with wild jasmine and the air is full of its scent" (Andersen 1975: 184). The last few miles are nothing short of paradise.

> It was a great change and very pleasant surprise to find on the northern side of the Pyrenees a much milder climate than that we had left so recently. Behind us lay the mountains decked with snow; here, on the contrary, the farther north we got, the greener the meadows and the fields became and when we reached Irun, the last Spanish town, there were flowers in all the gardens and oranges between the dark leaves of the orange trees (Andersen 1975: 184).

With stagecoach travel in nineteenth-century Spain, highwaymen were a real risk – and Andersen cites some recent attacks, and their underlying social causes. However, in reality the danger is not great, and Andersen praises the authorities for the steps they have taken to improve policing of the roads. Sarmiento, by contrast, sets his discussion of highwaymen in an isolated Manchegan *venta*, at night, when the travellers compete to tell the most frightening tales. Sarmiento's attitude is curious: on the one hand, he dismisses as fiction a gruesome account of murder (Sarmiento 1993: 161), on the grounds that it is a story he has already heard in Argentina. And yet, on hearing about a pitched battle on the Seville-Granada road, he decides to abandon his projected visit to the Alhambra. As we have seen from Andersen's account, there were at least some safe roads to Granada. So, what does Sarmiento's decision, to forgo a visit to this most beautiful of cities, signify? Is the Alhambra, the symbol of Moorish high culture in Spain, just a curiosity that one might as well visit, as one happened to

be in Spain, but not so important that it could not be sacrificed? Or, is this a proposed visit to an important cultural monument, that regrettably has been prevented by the outrageous barbarism rampant in the Spanish countryside?

3. The rural landscape

Despite travelling extensively through the Spanish countryside, Sarmiento paid little attention to the landscapes. His portrayal of the archetypal Castilian landscape, however, is not unpoetic.

> El aspecto físico de La España trae en efecto a la fantasía la idea de Africa o de las planicies asiáticas. La Castilla vieja es todavía una pradera inmensa en la que pacen numerosos rebaños, de ovejas sobre todo. La aldea miserable que el ojo del viajero encuentra, se muestra a lo léjos terrosa i triste; árbol alguno abriga bajo su sombra aquellas murallas medio destruidas, i en torno de las habitaciones, la flor mas indiferente no alza su tallo, para amenizar con sus colores escogidos la vista desapacible que ofrecen llanuras descoloridas, arbustillos espinosos, encinas enanas, i en la lontananza montañas descarnadas i perfiles adustos (Sarmiento 1993: 131).

The landscape, for Sarmiento, is really just mood setting; his description is as much about evoking what is not there, as about identifying what is, as he sees a Spain that is at once wretched, and exotically suggestive of Africa or Asia. But, is he seeing Spain at all? His description fits just as well the vast plains between mountain ranges, of his native Argentina.

Andersen, by contrast, provides detailed descriptions, capturing the contrasts between different areas within a single region, as the following sequence of descriptions of the different landscapes between Valencia and Murcia shows. First is the countryside outside Valencia, seen from the train.

> We flew into a land of sunshine, in which tall palm trees held their green fans high in the luminous air and whitewashed, friendly buildings lay among fruit-filled orange trees. Vines grew like a woven net over the earth, with rippling channels of water forming the woof (Andersen 1975: 45).

Beyond Játiva, however, the gentle, fertile landscape changes dramatically.

> From the oasis burgeoning with fruit one comes into the stony desert. The sun beat down and it was as if the stony ground had stored up heat

> from yesterday's sun and was now releasing it into the already too warm air. Farms lay solitary, endlessly far from each other, their fortress-like walls a protection against wild beasts and wicked men. Not a tree was in sight and the only green touch was in some big cacti whose spongy leaves swelled up like fungi in rock crevices or behind fallen walls (Andersen 1975: 45-46).

After visiting Alicante, Andersen set off by stagecoach for Murcia. Leaving the parched port city, he passes through a landscape which is "bounded by dark, bare hills", on a road like "an endless, dried-up village pond" (Andersen 1975: 52). By contrast, at the first stop, at nearby Elche, he finds what is effectively an oasis.

> Enormous palm trees stretched up their layered, scaly trunks, surprisingly thick and yet slender in relation to their height. Dates hung in great heavy bunches from stem after stem beneath the leafy green screens. Pomegranates filled the undergrowth, where the brilliant red fruit shone between the dark leaves; and here and there was a lemon tree, the pale yellow fruit contrasting with the red of the pomegranates (Andersen 1975: 53).

Later, arriving at the outskirts of Orihuela, Andersen sees a landscape that is dry, but nevertheless fertile and reasonably productive.

> The bare hills receded further and further into the horizon. Aloes with their tree-high flowering stems stood thick as plantains. The fields were overgrown with enormous cacti, covered with their ripe, red-gold fruit, and on the higher ground Spanish peppers, the bright-red pimento, lay spread out to dry in the sun (Andersen 1975: 55-56).

Finally, he arrives at the Murcian *huerta*, a land of abundance.

> Here, as in Valencia, water is piped from the river into the *campaña* which, by means of this artificial irrigation, is transformed into a fertile garden. Vines, maize, beans and love-apples grow in beds between mulberry bushes and pomegranates. We drove down into the waterless river bed, by the side of tall bamboo rushes (Andersen 1975: 56).

4. The *corrida*

The bullfight is a topic of major significance for Sarmiento, because for him it defines and explains fundamental aspects of the Spanish character – and because he finds that it resonates strongly with his own nature. At the centre of his exploration of the topic is an account of the *corridas reales* that he witnessed, in the Plaza Mayor, Madrid.

From the beginning Sarmiento is more advocate than critic: the *corrida* marks the Spanish people as a species of decadent Romans; it

is simultaneously consolation for national decline, and a mark of nobility. Indeed, the Spaniards' blood lust marks their superiority over (advanced, civilised?) northern races, with their degrading drunkenness.

> Sobre la plaza de toros el pueblo español es grande i sublime; es pueblo soberano, pueblo rei tambien. Allí se resarce, con emociones mas vivas que las del juego, de las privaciones a que su pobreza lo condena, i si esta diversion puede ser acusada de barbarie i de crueldad, es preciso convenir, sin embargo, que no envilece al individuo como la borrachera, que es el innoble placer de todos los pueblos del norte (Sarmiento 1993: 140).

He also sees the *corrida* as truly national, in that it is at once genuinely popular, and also carried out under official auspices. In this, he sees it occupying a cultural space similar to that once occupied by the theatre of Lope and Calderón. Indeed, he blames imported conventions, such as the Aristotelian unities (for which the French are presumably responsible), for alienating the theatre from the people, leaving the *corrida* as the only genuine Spanish high art form. There is no mistaking Sarmiento's enthusiasm, approbation of, and excitement at, bullfighting.

> Cuando la arena está cubierta de caballos destripados, cuando la sangre hace fango sobre el suelo, entónces el pueblo de todas clases i sexos no puede contener su entusiasmo, se pone de pié para aplaudir a los vencedores, ya sean toros u hombres, para ver hundirse la espada del matador en el corazon del toro furioso, para sorprender el último jemido de la víctima i deleitarse con su agonía. La noche halla a los espectadores ajitándose sobre sus bancos, i pidiendo a voces nuevas carnicerías i nuevos combates. Id, pues, a hablar a estos hombres de caminos de hierro, de industria o de debates constitucionales! (Sarmiento 1993: 141).

Sarmiento, who in Montevideo condemned the public spectacle of throat-cutting as a regrettable product of the Spanish mentality, now revels in blood, and scorns all the aspects and products – artistic, intellectual, technological – of civilisation. Specifically, the comment about railways, of which he would be an enthusiastic promoter, suggests that although overtly he was a committed moderniser, nevertheless, in reality he felt some ambivalence about technological progress.[11]

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11 Ambivalence or reticence about railways is often found in River Plate culture. Enrique Amorim, for example, in 1937 wrote his beautiful, nostalgic story about the ox-carts that, late in the nineteenth century, plied north from Salto into Brazil,

Sarmiento accepts the gladiatorial-aesthetic values of the *corrida*, namely that man and bull are basically equals, and both are required to be skilful and brave – or suffer the derision of the audience. The only aspect that shocks him is "la muerte cierta e innoble" of so many horses (Sarmiento 1993: 141).[12]

As well as describing the pomp and circumstance of the occasion, Sarmiento writes two admiring accounts of *corridas*. First is that of the *matador* Montes, whose performance he likens to a piece of music, in which the passes are like "variaciones de un tema único que es la muerte, i cuyas melodías se componen de coraje, actitudes artísticas, destreza i sangre fría" (Sarmiento 1993: 145). This is followed by the work of a *caballero en plaza* who despatches bulls with consummate ease.

> De los cuatro caballeros, uno solo permaneció en la arena; pero tan brillantemente se condujo, que en esta corrida hizo olvidar toda la gloria de que habrian podido cubrirse hasta entónces los picadores de profesion. Cuatro toros cayeron sucesivamente muertos bajo su frájil rejoncillo; uno de ellos, en una primera embestida, habia ensartado en las astas su caballo, i levantando i sacudiendo en el aire caballo i caballero, echólos a rodar por el suelo. Pero el intrépido aficionado haciendo poner de pié su caballo, sin perder un instante la silla, esperó, por segunda vez al toro, i atravesándole el corazon de un rejonazo, lo hizo caer muerto a los piés de

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"La plaza de las carretas". Yet, it is thanks to him that what is believed to be the first steam railway locomotive constructed in South America, *Criollo* (Salto: 1895) survives – albeit as a rusty wreck. W. H. Hudson is an even more contradictory case. Fleeing Argentina in the 1870s, to escape the modernisation that the railways and immigration were bringing, he was resident for the rest of his life in London, but actually spent his time travelling by train all over England, and writing books about an idyllic countryside – in which there were no railways. In contrast, some writers have been highly critical of the railways which, unlike their European counterparts, were implanted from outside, seeing them as serving foreign interests, and as being the source of Argentina's economic problems. Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz is of course the most famous and polemical of these. Ezequiel Martínez Estrada is another case in point – although one wonders quite how he would have commuted between his two jobs, in Buenos Aires and La Plata, without the railway.

12 Sarmiento is clearly an urban man. Interestingly, a rural episode in *The Purple Land*, by Hudson, whose sympathies were basically *Rosista*, reveals a very different valuation of horses: out on the Uruguayan pampa a horse is gored by a cow, causing its entrails to spill out. Its rider dismounts, sews the animal's side up again and remounts. Asked by his (English) companion whether the horse will live, the *peón* replies, with indifference, that the only thing that matters is that it will live long enough to carry him back to the *estancia*.

> su montura, como para que diese condigna reparacion de la pasada ofensa (Sarmiento 1993: 146).

Sarmiento acknowledges the *corrida*'s powerful effect on him: "He visto los toros, i sentido todo su sublime atractivo. Espectáculo bárbaro, terrible, sanguinario, i sin embargo, lleno de seduccion i de estímulo. Imposible apartar un momento los ojos [...]" (Sarmiento 1993: 147). This then leads to a meditation on man's deeper emotions, that the *corrida* (and war) satisfy:

> Oh! Las emociones del corazon! La necesidad de emociones que el hombre siente, i que satisfacen los toros, como no satisface el teatro, ni espectáculo alguno civilizado! La exasperacion de las batallas para los veteranos solo puede comparáseles (Sarmiento 1993: 147).

He goes further: "después de haber visto los toros en España, he lamentado que hayan pasado para nosotros los tiempos en que se quemaban hombres vivos" (Sarmiento 1993: 147). He goes on to assert that the burning of heretics and the *corrida* have in Spain always been closely linked. From this he argues that this instinct for barbarous pleasure at the spilling of so much animal blood, also explains the cruelty of the Carlist wars and the throat-cutting practised in the River Plate. Finally, he as it were draws back, and repents of his newly rediscovered and reawakened barbarism, reflecting: "He caido sin quererlo en estas tristes reflexiones morales, quizá por reaccion contra las tentaciones de crueldad que el espectáculo habia revivido en mí" (Sarmiento 1993: 148).

Andersen witnessed two bullfights, and his reactions were very different from Sarmiento's. The first, in Barcelona, was a popular, light-hearted affair. 'It was like a wild carnival. Men pelted each other with bags of flour and sausages, and the ladies did not escape: here flew oranges, there a glove or an old hat, all with cheerful uproar (Andersen 1975: 29). Two clumsy bullfights are described. In the first, the bull (clearly a *novillo*) has no wish to fight, and the matador is unskilful, taking several attempts before he can deliver the *coup de grâce*. The second young bull is equally docile, and is quickly killed. The afternoon ends with two bulls, their horns padded, being let into the ring for the public to enjoy the thrill of being chased. Andersen is unmoved by the spectacle – because he knows that he has not seen the real thing: only two bulls have been killed, and no horses have died. Andersen is aware of what normally happens, however:

> Very often, at the first encounter, the bull drives its pointed horn into the horse so that its entrails spill out. They are pushed in again and the gash is stitched so that the wretched beast can bear its rider for a few more minutes (Andersen 1975: 30).

Andersen's initiation into the real *corrida* is in Malaga. This time he gives no eyewitness account, merely summarising the events and giving his reaction.

> [H]ere we saw it in all its brutality and horror... a score of horses and five bulls had been killed and there were still seven bulls left to fight, when I decided that I had had enough. I was so nauseated that I left the arena, after which the fight became even more bloody and – as I was told – more interesting [...] It is a brutal, horrible form of popular entertainment! (Andersen 1975: 78-79).

The contrast with Sarmiento's presentation of a similarly gory scene could hardly be greater: attraction versus revulsion. Andersen is shocked and sickened; but he draws no atavistic generalised conclusions about the Spanish character. Quite the contrary: "I heard many Spaniards express the same opinion: they said that it would not go on for much longer and that recently a petition for the discontinuance of these fights had been presented to the *Cortes*" (Andersen 1975: 79). As history has shown, of course, this was wishful thinking, and Spain remains divided on the issue.

5. Cities and architecture

Sarmiento's anti-clockwise, and Andersen's clockwise journeys share many locations. Both stayed in Madrid, writing quite extensively about the city itself, and also describing visits to El Escorial. Burgos, Seville, Cordoba, Valencia and Barcelona are the other cities described at significant length by both writers.[13]

We begin with Burgos, where Sarmiento spent his second, and Andersen his last night in Spain. Sarmiento presents Burgos in two contrasting ways. During the daytime, seen in close-up, it corresponds to the sordid, ruinous present of Spain; it is "un pobre monton de rui-

13 As we saw in the discussion of travel by stagecoach, Sarmiento omitted Granada from his planned itinerary. The other major city to which Andersen devotes an entire chapter is, unsurprisingly, Toledo. Sarmiento, however simply dismisses Toledo as typical of Castilian cities, which are "montones de ruinas") (1993: 166).

nas vivas i habitadas por un pueblo cuyo aspecto es todo lo que se quiera, ménos poético, ni culto" (Sarmiento 1993: 135). However, it can also be an exotic, historic space where the imagination takes flight. Catching sight of the city for the first time, in the distance, from the stagecoach, Sarmiento observes that: "Burgos, con su catedral gótica, se levanta cual sombra de los tiempos heróicos, como el alma en pena de la caballería española" (1993: 133). He follows this with an account of a nocturnal visit to the cathedral, in which the moonlight playing on the turrets, spires and pinnacles creates a fantastic, theatrical effect; the statues of saints, meanwhile, "guardan la entrada como mudos fantasmas" (Sarmiento 1993: 134). The tour continues with a visit to the Cid's house, and to the city battlements, from where Sarmiento looks out across the dark countryside, imagining the presence of an encamped enemy army of Moors. Sarmiento, then, travels back in his imagination to a key historical moment: the beginning of the Christian reconquest of Spain.

It seems highly probable that Andersen, if he had visited Burgos earlier in his journey and in better weather, would have written an imaginative account, perhaps not so dissimilar to Sarmiento's.[14] As it is, we are given little direct sense of the city, beyond the snow-covered streets and the bitter wind. Andersen mentions monuments in passing, and of course invokes the Cid. And, like Sarmiento, he did visit the cathedral: "In sleet and slush we stumbled to the cathedral" (Andersen 1975: 178). But his description is matter-of-fact: he simply notes the many splendid tombs and chapels. By now, Andersen is no longer interested in tourism, his sole preoccupation being with keeping warm. The main focus of his Burgos chapter is the interior of the hotel, and there are numerous references to log fires and braziers – in contrast to the snow outside. Indeed, Burgos nearly gained notoriety as the place of Andersen's death: he relates how he almost died of the fumes from a coke brazier left burning all night in his hotel room.

The contrast between the South American's and the northern European's view of Madrid, too, is considerable. Sarmiento describes few places, but automatically accepts the capital's representative

14 Certainly, his visit to another historic Castilian city, Toledo, combines enthusiastic, historically-informed description of monuments, with a strong sense of poverty and decay.

status: its architecture "revela el gusto nacional por los espectáculos i el largo i tradicional hábito de paradas, cortejos i procesiones" (Sarmiento 1993: 137). He describes only two public spaces. First, he finds that *calle* Alcalá is "una de las mas bellas i espaciosas de la Europa" (Sarmiento 1993: 137), identifying that area and Puerta del Sol as the nerve centre and heart of the city. Unsurprisingly, the most detailed description is of Plaza Mayor, which he saw when it was decorated for the *corridas reales*. He contrasts this great, cloistered square, with its triumphal arches, palaces, balconies, turrets and pinnacles, with the Paris Hippodrome which, he says, by comparison "habria parecido un juguete de carton, bueno solo para divertir a los niños" (Sarmiento 1993: 143). There is one other description of a building: the Teatro Real. The exterior is anonymous, but the decorated interior he finds elegant, and greatly superior to the "grandes i suntuosas pocilgas de Paris" (Sarmiento 1993: 149).[15] Once again, as was the case in his presentation of the bullfight, there is a strong tendency for Sarmiento to identify with Spain, and to reject the culture of the north.

Andersen arrived in the Spanish capital in winter, after he had visited most of the country's impressive and ancient monumental cities. Although he liked the inhabitants of Madrid, he had a low opinion of the city itself. His view of Puerta del Sol is in complete contrast to Sarmiento's, with the Dane regarding it as, frankly, nondescript and seedy: "in the square below, where several of the principal streets of the city meet, it was dark and dirty. [...] there was nothing particularly new or characteristic to be seen" (Andersen 1975: 158). Later he goes further: Madrid, far from being an archetypal Spanish city, as it was for Sarmiento, "has none of the character of a Spanish city, let alone that of the capital" (Andersen 1975: 160). It has two redeeming features, however: the Prado museum and the Italian opera. Andersen limits his descriptions of the city to three plazas: the first, Plaza de Oriente, is the most beautiful in the city, while Plaza de las Cortes, by contrast, is dismissed as "really only an extension of the road in front of the National Assembly building" (Andersen 1975: 161). Plaza Mayor, unsurprisingly, receives the most detailed description – although once again the contrast with Sarmiento's enthusiasm and the

15 In fact, in spite of his assertion of the primacy of the *corrida*, Sarmiento takes a detailed interest in the theatre in Spain – as, too, does Andersen.

Dane's negative impressions is striking. First, Andersen finds that the Plaza has the air of a prison yard; then, he describes the "small indifferent shops" (Andersen 1975: 161) and the wretched beggars busking. Most vividly, he evokes, with revulsion, exactly what Sarmiento exults in: "In olden days it was the scene of bloody bullfights and the dreadful *autos-da-fé*" (Andersen 1975: 161). As we have already seen, the "olden times", in respect of the bullfights, at least, were actually quite recent.

However, in the Prado, perhaps because there he finds again the Spain that had so enchanted him in other cities, Andersen enthuses about the paintings. He singles out for praise Velázquez and, especially, Murillo, in whose work he detects "heavenly revelation" (Andersen 1975: 164). For once, the two writers agree on something: Sarmiento, too, is impressed by a museum that is "uno de los mas ricos i desiertos de la Europa" (Sarmiento 1993: 158). However, the Argentine's account follows (and perhaps was influenced by) his gloomy meditations on El Escorial; Sarmiento, ever the cultural theorist, interprets the art in the Prado as reflecting Spain's negative traits. Specifically, he considers that Spanish painting – like the other arts in the country – is no longer alive and developing: for Sarmiento the great works of art represent the petrified Spain that Philip II's El Escorial epitomises. Importantly, Sarmiento sees art in Spain as an isolated, self-sufficient phenomenon: although great in itself, it neither builds on the achievements of antiquity, nor bequeaths anything to the future. Such art is the direct representation of the Spanish character – and Sarmiento thinks that he sees in the streets of nineteenth-century Spain exactly the same figures that Velázquez and Murillo saw. Most damning is his reflection on a picture that, from its description, must be by Goya.

> Lo único que hai digno i noble es la figura de simpática de los oficiales franceses que distribuyen víveres; todo lo demas es vil de formas, innoble de sentimiento, asqueroso de aspecto i de decoracion. ¿Cómo no han sentido los españoles el oprobio que este cuadro hace a su pais? (Sarmiento 1993: 159).

Sarmiento's introduction of El Escorial as the Spanish Versailles[16] is initially puzzling, until he explains that he means that it – like the

16 La Granja de San Ildefonso, near Segovia, is a more plausible candidate.

Parthenon, the Colisseum, Versailles and St Peter's Rome – is a funerary monument to its civilisation. However, he finds that the latter two edifices, unlike El Escorial, celebrate the arts and sciences of their civilisations – and in this sense are living entities which have an enduring appeal. (He notes that there are two railways to Versailles, to cope with the enormous tourist traffic.) In contrast to these "artísticas i esplendorosas ruinas" (Sarmiento 1993: 156), El Escorial, which is served by "una dilijencia sucia i estrecha" (Sarmiento 1993: 155), receives fewer than twenty visitors a week, and "es un cadáver [...] que hiede e inspira disgusto" (Sarmiento 1993: 156). Sarmiento sets the negative mood from the start, describing the ruinous, barbarous outskirts of the city, and concluding: "Esta escena de desolacion, aquella pampa salvaje intermediaria entre una capital i un monumento, preparan el espíritu, deprimiéndolo i entristeciéndolo, para acercarse al panteon de Felipe II." (Sarmiento 1993: 155).[17] The journey continues through a treeless, waterless valley to a wasteland in which stands a bare rock where Philip II had many of his workers executed. The gridiron plan of the building is "sombrío i bárbaro" (Sarmiento 1993: 156). Culturally, El Escorial is a monument to the assassination of free thought, and the foundation of a religious establishment called a "monstruoso vampiro" (Sarmiento 1993: 157). El Escorial represents all that is wrong with Spain: "Oh Escorial! aquí, bajo tus bóvedas sombrías está toda la historia de esta pobre enferma, cuyo hondo mal médico alguno ha estudiado todavia" (Sarmiento 1993: 157).

However, the crucial point, as far as Sarmiento's spiritual and cultural journey of discovery is concerned, is that although El Escorial may be the tomb of a dead Spanish culture, it also has living, pre-Hispanic occupants, as prisoners within its walls.

> Están cautivos allí los manuscritos árabes; i todavia despues de tres siglos de incomunicacion, aquellos ilustres presos no han sido interrogados; [...] La antigua lejislacion contra herejes e infieles está vijente para ellos, la prision perpetua, la incomunicacion i la denegacion de audiencia. Pero, en fin, no han sido quemados vivos los manuscritos árabes, i aun esperan que se les haga justicia (Sarmiento 1993: 158).

17 Sarmiento's use of that archetypal River Plate term, *pampa* (which is of Quechua origin) seems to underline his sense of connectedness to Spain and Spanishness, in spite of his explicit negativity.

The manuscripts, representing the Arab inheritance, potentially can speak, can be the source of cultural renewal.

Andersen's brief account of El Escorial, like Sarmiento's, is negative: "The silence of death broods over those vaults, over the town and country around" (Sarmiento 1975: 175). Indeed, according to the Dane, it is only death, in the form of a royal burial, that occasionally brings the town to life. Andersen continues with the story of the martyrdom of St Lawrence and the cruelty of Philip II. He uses images of the wind, to emphasise how bleak and sinister the place is.

> Beneath it rests the Royal Lord, over it whistles the wind in violent gusts from the bare, wild *Guadarrama* mountains, with a sound of moaning and groaning; It was a dark, gloomy, unpleasant evening when we left the *Escorial*, with a howling wind (Andersen 1975: 176).

Having used descriptions of nature to suggest that the place in itself eerie and sinister, Andersen switches the focus. Like Sarmiento, it is a human barbarism that he sees in El Escorial: "But there are no mourning spirits in the storm, [...] – it is through the pages of history that the spirits weep, telling of the dark, cruel deeds of Philip II." (Andersen 1975: 176).

The reactions of the two writers to Cordoba, the birthplace of Seneca and the once-great capital of the Caliphate, are quite similar. For Sarmiento, the city "fué reina i la vemos mendiga i cubierta de harapos i de lepra" (Sarmiento 1993: 162); and the remaining Roman and Arabic buildings, as well as the beautiful surrounding countryside, anthropomorphised, bemoan its fate. Sarmiento recounts how hundreds of Roman columns were used in the construction of the great mosque, whose "capilla del Zancarron" he praises as a unique jewel of Moorish architecture. (Rather tellingly, there is no hint that the mosque is now the cathedral.)

As is customary, Andersen gives far more detail, both from direct observation, and from his reading. His contrast of the city's past and present illustrates this well.

> Under Moorish rule, Córdoba was the capital, with a million inhabitants, six hundred mosques and a hundred public baths. Art and science flourished here, and now – how different! One finds poor, narrow, empty streets; Córdoba has sunk down and is now just an insignificant provincial town (Andersen 1975: 149).

Similarly, while Sarmiento merely invokes "la belleza del paisaje" (Sarmiento 1993: 162), Andersen provides detail of a specific view.

> From the Alameda there is a view over the broad, rushing river to the countryside, a fertile landscape with hills, olive groves and, here and there, a tall palm tree and the ruins of a great tower silhouetted on the horizon. Behind the town to the north are the mountains of the *Sierra Morena*, dark-blue and forbidding. The air was heavy with clouds (Andersen 1975: 149).

Unsurprisingly, the mosque-cathedral is the centrepiece of Andersen's account. His visit starts unpromisingly: "the exterior is unremarkable, neither picturesque nor impressive" (Andersen 1975: 150). Once inside the building, however, Andersen journeys though the "forest half-light" of the avenues of columns, until he reaches the centre point, "a lofty, white-plastered, richly gilded Christian church, into which full daylight falls on a great, shining altar" (Andersen 1975: 150). He then moves to the "lace-like carving" above a door facing the river, reflecting that "it is still the most interesting spot in the whole building and has retained its original beauty" (Andersen 1975: 150). Leaving what he calls a "thought-provoking, awe-inspiring sanctuary" (he means this ecumenically) Andersen comes to the Roman bridge, and to the ruins of the Moorish *alcázar*. While the mosque-cathedral seems to symbolise a chaotic – but positive – mingling of the religions, Andersen's presentation of the history of the *alcázar* is harrowing: there is no doubt where he assigns the Sarmentine attributes of civilisation and barbarism.

> Here was the beautiful *Alcázar* of the Moorish kings, with its carved marble arches, its rose gardens and fountains. Here echoed music and song, here resounded the drums and trumpets in days and nights of festivity. But all this splendour vanished like clouds away, and darkness and anguish followed. The Spanish Inquisition moved into these halls, walled up the light, airy casements and set up instruments of torture where once soft cushions were spread; the anguished screams of victims being tortured to death were heard where once the lute was played and gentle voices echoed. (1975: 151)

Andalusia's capital, Seville, produces fundamental disagreement in interpretation between Sarmiento and Andersen. Initially, Sarmiento is dismissive, before becoming frankly accusatory.

> Aquí no hai nada [...] escepto el archivo de Simancas i el de Sevilla reunidos, que contienen los documentos de la colonizacion de la América; pero es preciso pedir a la reina en Madrid, por un memorial, permiso para

> visitar sus estantes i nada he podido verificar de ciertos hechos que me interesan (Sarmiento 1993: 162).

This is pure pique, and the allegory is easily deciphered. Seville represents Spain's power over America; and the locked archive symbolises Spain's continued possession of, and withholding from him, of Sarmiento's own history.

Andersen's account, meanwhile (unlike Sarmiento, he did visit the archive) is so comprehensive and ecstatic, as to constitute blatant promotional literature. A few examples of his hyperbole will suffice. First, he praises "the unforgettable cathedral, which in its majesty makes an even deeper impression than St Peter's, Rome" (Andersen 1975: 146). Then, he waxes lyrical about the city as a whole. "If Seville lay where Cadiz lies [...] it would be a Spanish Venice and, what is more, a living Venice, a wonder of the first order [...] excelling other cities of the world" (Andersen 1975: 143). It is also superior to Paris, where "one tires oneself out looking at shops [...] one goes as in a treadmill [...], it is quite otherwise in Seville" (Andersen 1975: 143-4). He praises cultural events and traditions too, such as the *zarzuela* and the legend of Don Juan Tenorio. He also compares Parisian and Sevillian dancing: the former is "so free, so wanton", while the latter "allows the beauty of the human form to be seen in natural movement [...] the blood may quicken but the dance is always beautiful" (Andersen 1975: 145).[18]

Valencia is not actually described by Sarmiento, although the city nevertheless occupies an important place in his scheme of things. First, he notes that it is where "por la primera vez he comido bien i sin asco, en fondas, ventas i posadas en España" (Sarmiento 1993: 163). (Andersen, too, praises the food there - but he always finds Spanish food delicious, the single exception being a meal in Burgos.) The most significant aspect is how Sarmiento sees Valencia as reflecting his own cultural identity. In this land, at the boundary of the territory once occupied by the Moors, he notes the Arab roots of its technical progress, artistic achievement and democratic institutions: "en Valencia, la Huerta irrigada por canales i con una lejislacion sumaria, a la luz

18 It is in Seville – in November - that Andersen begins to complain of the cold. He seems to have misunderstood the climate there, since he recommends visiting the city in summer, "when one can see how the southerner lives" (144): this would probably not be the advice that experienced travellers would give.

del sol, que recuerda todavía el estrado, el divan, la puerta de calle en que los árabes administraban justicia" (Sarmiento 1993: 163). Furthermore, he notes the similarity of the inhabitants' dress to that of Argentines: in Mendoza, Cordoba and, finally, Cuyo, his own province. This same positive affirmation of the Arab inheritance within his own Hispanic nature is also made in the section, "El hogar paterno", in *Recuerdos de provincia* (first published 1850):

> la habitación única de la casa, dividida en dos departamentos: uno sirviendo de dormitorio a nuestros padres, y el mayor, de sala de recibo con su estrado alto y cojines, resto de las tradiciones del diván árabe que han conservado los pueblos españoles (Sarmiento 1966: 108).

Andersen for once finds little of note architecturally, the main interest being in a combination of slightly seedy but exotic details of street life, which show Valencia as truly Spanish, in contrast to "Frenchified Barcelona" (Andersen 1975: 39) from where he had arrived by steamer. Andersen of course comments on the Moorish irrigation system, and he too finds a similarity with his own country. Unlike Sarmiento, however, he makes no personal cultural identification, but simply draws a visual comparison.

> We drove through flat, fertile countryside which reminded me of Denmark: there were ditches on either side of the road, from which rose gnarled olive trees, rather like our willows among beds of reeds – but here the reeds were bamboos. The whitewashed cottages by the wayside had reed or straw thatches, as at home with us, and only the long, coloured curtains hung in the open doorways showed that we were in a southern land (Andersen 1975: 39).

The last city to consider is Barcelona – which both writers identify as being different from the rest of Spain. While Andersen notes that the city is the capital of Catalonia, Sarmiento goes so far as to state, categorically but inaccurately, "Estoi, por fin, fuera de la España" (1993: 166). He describes Barcelona as "enteramente europeo", likening the Rambla to a boulevard, and noting the quantity of manufacturing industry. He admires the Liceo theatre, then under construction, and also praises the art school. As is so frequently the case with Sarmiento, however, he is not much interested in the city or its people: most of his letter is about his excitement at meeting the English economist, Richard Cobden.

Andersen stayed in Barcelona for ten days, in a hotel on the Rambla. He finds that French fashion in clothing is fairly common, and praises the cafés of the Catalan capital, judging them superior to those of Paris. He sees Barcelona as equivalent to Turin, both cities being the Paris of their respective countries. While he finds the cathedral oppressive, he shares Sarmiento's enthusiasm for the Liceo, which by now is fully operational. The most interesting element is his eyewitness account of the devastating flood, that struck the city in mid-September, 1862.

In the light of both writers' insistence of the separate identity of Barcelona and Catalonia, it is rather surprising to find no mention of them hearing any language spoken, other than Castilian.

6. Conclusion

It is clear that, in spite of their very different national backgrounds, and the radically different cultural projects represented by their respective journeys, Sarmiento and Andersen share a similar ambivalence about the virtues and defects of an exotic, somewhat backward Spain, in comparison to a more developed northern Europe which is epitomised, for both writers, by Paris.

Andersen, who did not speak Spanish, clearly is culturally more detached than Sarmiento: he is a tourist. And yet, in some ways he is far more directly engaged than Sarmiento: he talked to people, studied landscapes, relished the different cuisines. It has to be said that, as a distinguished guest, he was given extremely privileged treatment; under these conditions, with the exception of the Malaga *corrida*, he sees almost all aspects of the Spain he experienced, including some very uncomfortable stagecoach journeys, as positive. The single factor that changes his perception is the weather (which may have affected his health): his account of winter in Castile is wholly negative.

Sarmiento gives the impression of being miserable and isolated: in light of his almost entirely negative attitude to Spanish high culture, infrastructure and cuisine, as well as his views on modernising the language, it would not be surprising if he found relations with Spaniards difficult at times. However, in reality, Sarmiento tended to be in distinguished, generally foreign, company, and certainly was not alone.

Much has already been written about Sarmiento's understanding of progress and underdevelopment, of civilisation and barbarism, and of his complex intellectual and emotional relationship with Spain, with Spanishness, and with what he sees as the Arabic inheritance of both Spain and her erstwhile colonies, such as Argentina. In this essay we have seen how on one level he scorns what he sees as a Hispanic/Arabic backwardness relative to France: this is his explicit view as he enters Spain; it recurs as he leaves what he considers to be Spain proper, and enters Catalonia; later, in Algeria, it will find perhaps its strongest manifestation.[19] However, on another level, in spite of many reservations about Spain, he undoubtedly feels the country to be in some senses more truly alive than France, and the north. The third element, though, is the most interesting: much of his progress through Spain, certainly from Burgos to Valencia, is an imaginary journey backwards through history, towards real or imagined Arabic cultural roots: in El Escorial he finds the ancient written texts, frozen in time, unheeded – but alive; then, in Cordoba he feels that the mosque is still a mosque, not a Christian church; finally, in Valencia, he finds a living culture, which he identifies specifically both with the Arab past and with the culture of his home province in Argentina.

Perhaps such largely imaginary – or spiritual – cross-cultural journeys are a necessary counterbalance to the physical and intellectual ones that accompany dramatic technological and social change. Pablo Neruda, for example, flew from Colombia to Peru in 1943, where he famously invoked the lost, ancient indigenous builders, whose lives he saw as encoded in the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu. And Sarmiento's compatriot, William Hudson, having fled the modernisation of the *pampa* that was the direct result of Sarmiento's policies (but then, incongruously, settling in London) frequently travelled by train down to the south coast, where he tried to enter into spiritual communion with the long-dead occupants of the prehistoric burial mounds, imagining that they were his "Iberian" ancestors.

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19 It is, however, noteworthy that it is specifically the nomadic (not urban) customs of Algeria, that Sarmiento uses as the paradigm; and that the comparison is not with Argentina (or Spain) in general, but rather more specific: "las tiendas [...] no están mas avanzadas que los toldos de nuestros salvajes de las pampas" (Sarmiento 1993: 190).

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